

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Sweetwater Lake

Site Code S.USCOHP*21934

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1433 Site Class PCA
Site Alias None

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

| <u>NCA Site ID</u> | <u>NCA Site Code</u> | <u>NCA Site Name</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| - | | No Data |

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 394726N
State Colorado Longitude 1071124W

Quad Code Quad Name
39107-G2 Sweetwater Lake

County
Garfield (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14010001 Colorado headwaters

SITE DESCRIPTION

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Minimum Elevation | 7,700.00 Feet | 2,347.00 Meters |
| Maximum Elevation | 9,600.00 Feet | 2,926.00 Meters |

Site Description

This site includes Sweetwater Lake and portions of two of its tributaries, Darnell and Lake Creeks, which actually merge prior to draining into the lake. These creeks are best characterized as steep and narrow with thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), and mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) dominating the overstory. There is also a fairly large willow carr along Darnell Creek where mountain willow and beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) are abundant. The upland slopes are vegetated with spruce-fir forests. The soils are not mapped within the boundaries of the site, however, just downstream the soils along the riparian area are mapped as Fluvaquents. Fluvaquents are a broadly defined unit consisting of deep, somewhat poorly drained soils on floodplains and alluvial valley floors (Soil Conservation Service 1992). These soils are typically stratified and widely vary in texture. The water table is typically within 2 feet of the soil surface during spring and summer. This riparian area likely does not provide much in the way of flood attenuation given the narrow and steep gradients. This area also likely provides excellent habitat for small and large mammals, avian species, and insects. Given the intact nature of the area, nutrient cycles are assumed to be intact which also provides excellent production export.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/15/2001
Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the narrow riparian areas, surrounding slopes, and some upstream drainages to ensure continued surface flow, periodic flooding, and opportunity for the creek's fluvial processes to maintain a dynamic distribution of riparian plant communities. These processes are necessary for the continued viability of the elements and maintenance of ecological functions. However, the entire upstream portion of the watershed was not included in the site boundaries. Thus, these areas need to be considered in order to ensure hydrological processes remain intact.

Primary Area 2,000.44 Acres 809.55 Hectares

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Sweetwater Lake

Site Code S.USCOHP*21934

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) mountain willow/beaked sedge (*Salix monticola*/*Carex utriculata*) montane riparian willow carr. This association is known from thirteen locations in Colorado, but an additional ten to twenty more are expected in the state. Mountain willow appears to be at the center of its distribution in Colorado, where it frequently forms large thickets with few other willow species present. Literature from Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Nevada and Oregon indicate that mountain willow loses importance north and west of Colorado, as it mixes with other willow species. A good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) aspen/thinleaf alder (*Populus tremuloides*/*Alnus incana*) montane riparian forest also occurs at this site. This plant association has only been documented in Colorado but is expected to occur in other Rocky Mountain States. A probable breeding record of the White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chichi*) was documented from this PCA in 1983, but no further observations have ever been reported.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

| <u>Element</u> | | | <u>Global</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>Driving</u> |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| <u>State ID</u> | <u>State Scientific Name</u> | <u>State Common Name</u> | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Site Rank</u> |
| 20637 | <i>Plegadis chichi</i> | White-faced Ibis | G5 | S2B | No |
| 24882 | <i>Salix monticola</i> / <i>Carex utriculata</i> Shrubland | Montane Riparian Willow Carr | G3 | S3 | Yes |
| 24911 | <i>Populus tremuloides</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Forest | Montane Riparian Forests | G3 | S3 | Yes |

REFERENCES

| <u>Reference ID</u> | <u>Full Citation</u> |
|---------------------|--|
| 160919 | Lyon, P. 2000. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Biological Assessment of Garfield County. |
| 160810 | Rocchio, J. 2000. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Wetland Inventory/Assessment of Garfield County. |

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/15/2001
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

Disclaimer

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Sweetwater Lake

Site Code S.USCOHP*21934

These data are a product and property of Colorado State University, Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). These data are strictly "on loan" and should be considered "works in progress". Data maintained in the Colorado Natural Heritage Program database are an integral part of ongoing research at CSU and reflect the observations of many scientists, institutions and our current state of knowledge. These data are acquired from various sources, with varying levels of accuracy, and are continually being updated and revised. Many areas have never been surveyed and the absence of data in any particular geographic area does not necessarily mean that species or ecological communities of concern are not present. These data should not be regarded as a substitute for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Absence of evidence is NOT evidence of absence. Absence of any data does not mean that other resources of special concern do not occur, but rather CNHP files do not currently contain information to document this presence. CNHP is not responsible for whether other, non-CNHP data providers have secured landowner permission for data collected.

These data are provided for non-commercial purposes only. Under no circumstances are data to be distributed in any fashion to outside parties. To ensure accurate application of data, tabular and narrative components must be evaluated in conjunction with spatial components. Failure to do so constitutes a misuse of the data. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program shall have no liability or responsibility to the data users, or any other person or entity with respect to liability, loss, or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the data, including but not limited to any interruption of service, loss of business, anticipatory profits or indirect, special, or consequential damages resulting from the use of operation of the data. Data users hereby agree to hold CNHP, Colorado State University, and the State of Colorado harmless from any claim, demand, cause of action, loss, damage or expense from or related to data users use of or reliance on the data, regardless of the cause or nature thereof, and even in the event that such cause is attributable to the negligence or misconduct of CNHP.

These data are provided on an as-is basis, as-available basis without warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, INCLUDING (BUT NOT LIMITED TO) WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. Although CNHP maintains high standards of data quality control, CNHP, Colorado State University, and the State of Colorado further expressly disclaim any warranty that the data are error-free or current as of the date supplied